

Message Text

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OMB-01 SS-15 /113 W

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P R 311020Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5354

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

USDEL JEC PARIS

CIA

DIA

JCS

JUSMAAG

WHITE HOUSE

USAJFKCMA

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

USDAO SAIGON

CINCPAC

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DEPCHIEF JUSMAAG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 SAIGON 13781

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PFOR ECON VS

SUBJECT: EMBASSY SAIGON'S MISSION WEEKLY, JULY 25-31, 1973

BANGKOK ALSO PASS OSA; DEPT ALSO FOR AID/W; CINCPAC FOR POLAD;
DOD PRO USAJFKCMA ATTN: ATCS-WL-DSA

THE WEEK IN BRIEF

--FIGHTING UP IN SOUTHERN THREE REGIONS

--CANADIANS DEPART, ICCS STAGNATES

--PRISONER RELEASES BEGIN AGAIN, THEN STALL

--UPPER HOUSE ELECTION CAMPAIGN BEGINS

--AN QUANG DISAVOWS RADICAL EXPATRIATE BONZE THIEN CHAU

--18TH RVN/PRG BILATERAL: NO PROGRESS

--GVN PROTESTS SENEGAL'S RECOGNITION OF THE PRG

--DELAY AND SOME CONFUSION OVER THIEU'S TRIP TO THAILAND

--GVN STATEMENT ON EXPIRATION OF 45-DAY TARGET DATE SET

BY PARIS JOINT COMMUNIQUE

--PHAN VAN DONG IN EASTERN EUROPE

--JAPAN AND QUESTION OF PRG VISITORS

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--VC SIGN AGREEMENTS WITH MONGOLIA, BULGARIA

--YEMENI AMBASSADOR ARRIVES IN HANOI

--CONGO (B) PRESIDENT TO VISIT HANOI

--MOSCOW-HANOI TRAINING AGREEMENT

--MORE ENVOYS PRESENT CREDENTIALS IN VC ZONE

--PRICES UP AGAIN; BLACK MARKET DOLLAR RATE STEADY

--MORE ON POSSIBLE DIOXIN CONTAMINATION OF VIETNAMESE SHRIMP

JAPANESE TO GRANT FIFTY MILLION DOLLARS AID TO GVN

I. INTERNAL

A. THE CEASEFIRE

MILITARY ACTIVITY IN THE SOUTHERN THREE REGIONS OF SVN HAS BEEN GRADUALLY INCREASING AND HAS NOW REACHED ABOUT THE SAME LEVEL AS PREVAILED BEFORE THE JUNE 13 PARIS JOINT COMMUNIQUE. THE NORTHERN PART OF MR-1, ABOVE THE HAI VAN PASS, IS THE ONLY TRULY QUIET AREA IN THE COUNTRY, PERHAPS BECAUSE THERE THE FRONT LINE IS MORE CLEARLY DEFINED THAN ELSEWHERE IN SVN. SOUTH OF THE PASS RVNAF CONTINUE CLEARING OPERATIONS IN THE COASTAL LOWLANDS, SEEKING TO CLEAN OUT VC "LEOPARD SPOTS." IN MR-2, GVN FORCES CONTINUE WITH LITTLE SUCCESS TO BANG AWAY AT ENTRENCHED NVA TROOPS WEST OF KONTUM CITY. GVN CLEARING OPERATIONS NEAR ROUTE 1 IN BINH DINH ARE HAVING MORE SUCCESS. IN MR-3, THE LEVEL OF FIGHTING IS NOW NEARING THE HIGHEST LEVEL SINCE THE JANUARY 28 CEASEFIRE. MOST OF THE ACTION CENTERS ON ROUTE 1-A, THE ONLY ROAD TO THE GVN ENCLAVE IN PHUOC BINH WHICH IS STILL BLOCKED. IN THE DELTA ACTIVITY LARGELY CENTERED IN CHUONG THIEN AND CHAU DOC.

THE CANADIAN DELEGATION ON THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR CONTROL AND SUPERVISION HAS LEFT SVN, AND ALMOST ALL ICCS ACTIVITY HAS CEASED. THE ONLY FUNCTION THE ICCS MAY CONTINUE IS OBSERVING AT THE SITE OF PRISONER RELEASES.

THE PARTIES ON THE TWO PARTY JOINT MILITARY COMMISSION (TPJMC)
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MARKED WITH ACRIMONY THE JULY 28 PASSAGE OF THE 45TH DAY SINCE THE SIGNING OF THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE IN PARIS, A DATE BY WHICH IT HAD BEEN HOPED THAT THERE WOULD BE PROGRESS TOWARD A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT.

EACH HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE IN SAIGON, BLAMING THE OTHER FOR LACK OF PROGRESS.

THE FOUR PARTY JOINT MILITARY TEAM (FPJMT) CONTINUES TO BE CRIPPLED BY COMMUNIST OBSTRUCTIONISM. THERE WAS AGREEMENT ON SOME MINOR POINTS DURING THE WEEK, BUT ON THE MAJOR ISSUES THE DEADLOCK REMAINS. SAIGON-HANOI LIAISON FLIGHT WAS CANCELLED FOR THE SIXTH WEEK BECAUSE OF DRV REFUSAL TO SIGN A ROUTINE SAFETY DECLARATION.

B. EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS STALLS ON SECOND DAY

THE EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS THAT BEGAN ON JULY 23 (SEE PREVIOUS WEEK) BOGGED DOWN AFTER ONLY A DAY AND A HALF. OF THE 4,331 GVN-HELD CIVILIANS SCHEDULED FOR RELEASE TO THE PRG, 825 WERE TURNED OVER (SOME OF THIS NUMBER RALLIED TO THE GVN RATHER THAN GO TO THE PRG). THE COMMUNISTS STAGED A DEMONSTRATION AT THE LOC NINH EXCHANGE SITE DURING THE JULY 24 TRANSFERS AND THE GVN SUSPENDED FURTHER OPERATIONS PENDING ASSURANCES THAT SUCH DEMONSTRATIONS WILL NOT OCCUR

AGAIN. THE EXCHANGES ARE STILL STALLED.

ANOTHER ARGUMENT AROSE OVER 20 PEOPLE WHO WERE TURNED OVER TO THE PRG JULY 23 (AFTER THE ICCS OBSERVERS HAD LEFT THE SITE) BUT WHO COMPLAINED THE NEXT DAY THAT THE GVN HAD FORCED THEM TO THE PRG SIDE BECAUSE THEY HAD REFUSED TO ACCEPT GVN RALLYING PROCEDURES. THE GVN MAINTAINS THAT THIS IS A COMMUNIST PLOT TO ESTABLISH THIS GROUP AS A "THIRD FORCE," AND THAT AS LONG AS THEY ATTEMPT TO MAINTAIN THIS POSE, THE GVN WILL NOT ACCEPT THEM.

AS THE EXCHANGE PROGRAM BEGAN, THE GVN ANNOUNCED THAT SEVERAL PROMINENT PRISONERS INCLUDING EX-DEPUTY TRAN NGOC CHAU AND STUDENT LEADER HUYNH TAN MAM WOULD BE OFFERED TO THE PRG, WITH THE OPTION TO RALLY TO RVN LIKE THE OTHERS. (THE ANNOUNCED LIST DID NOT INCLUDE IMPRISONED WOMAN ACTIVIST NGO BASTHANH.) NONE OF THESE PERSONS YAS YET BEEN TAKEN TO AN EXCHANGE SITE. OBSERVERS ARE CURRENTLY SPECULATING WHAT THE GVN WILL DO IF CHAU, ASSUMING THERE IS A RESUMPTION OF THE EXCHANGES, REFUSES EITHER TO GO TO CONFIDENTIAL

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THE COMMUNISTS OR TO RALLY AS THE GVN WISHES.

C. UPPER HOUSE ELECTION CAMPAIGN BEGINS

THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE UPPER HOUSE ELECTION BEGAN OFFICIALLY ON JULY 27. POSTERS OF THE FOUR COMPETING SLATES APPEARED FROM EARLY MORNING THAT DAY, AND RADIO AND TELEVISION BROADCASTS JULY 27 AND 28 PRESENTED THEIR PLATFORMS.

THD CENTRAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE HAS DRAWN UP A SCHEDULE FOR THE MONTHLONG CAMPAIGN TO WHICH THE SLATES MUST ADHERE STRICTLY. NO CONTACT WITH THE PRESS OR WITH VOTERS IS ALLOWED OUTSIDE THE FIXED SCHEDULE, WHICH INCLUDES FURTHER RADIO AND TELEVISION BROADCASTS OF THE PLATFORMS, ONE PRESS CONFERENCE IN SAIGON, AND FIVE TALKS WITH VOTERS IN THE FOUR MILITARY REGIONS AND THE CAPITAL.

IN THE AUGUST 26 VOTING, TWO OF THE FOUR SLATES WILL WIN THE 31 VACANT SEATS. THE TOP VOTE-GETTING SLATE WILL SEAT ALL 16 OF ITS MEMBERS, WHILE THE SECOND-PLACE SLATE WILL WIN 15 SEATS. THE UPPER HOUSE TOTALS 60 SENATORS.

D. AN QUANG DISAVOWS THIEN CHAU

ON JULY 26 AN AN QUANG OFFICIAL ISSUED A STATEMENT DISAVOWING RECENT POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OF RADICAL EXPATRIATE BONZE THIEN CHAU IN PARIS. THIEN CHAU HAS BEEN ACTIVE IN FORMING A "COMMITTEE FOR PEACE AND DEMOCRATIC LIBERTIES IN SVN" WHICH CLAIMS TO REPRESENT THE "THIRD FORCE." THE COMMITTEE HAS BEEN DENOUNCED BY THE GVN. THE AN QUANG STATEMENT THAT THIEN CHAU DOES NOT SPEAK FOR THE BUDDHIST CHURCH IS AN INDICATION THAT RELATIVELY MORE MODERATE ELEMENTS WITHIN THE AN QUANG ORGANIZATION ARE STILL IN CONTROL.

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AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

USDEL JEC PARIS

CIA

DIA

JCS

JUSMAAG

WHITE HOUSE

USAFKCMC

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

AMCONSUL DANANG

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PART II EXTERNAL

A GVN/PRG BILATERALS; 18TH PLENARY SESSION
LAST SESSION OF GVN /PRG BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS BEFORE
EXPIRATION OF 45-DAY TARGET PERIOD SET BY JUNE 13 PARIS COMMUNIQUE
MADE NO MORE PROGRESS THAN PREVIOUS ONES. GVN PRESENTED A NEW
VERSION OF ITS JUNE 28 PLAN WITH DATES SLIGHTLY CHANGED TO ALLOW
FOR PASSAGE OF TIME BUT STILL LEADING UP TO GENERAL ELECTIONS
ON CHRISTMAN DAY. THE PRG HARSHLY ATTACKED THE GVN AND SAID ONLY
AFTER RESTORATION OF DEMOCRATIC LIBERTIES IN SOUTH VIET-NAM
COULD ANY PROGRESS BE MADE TOWARD A POLITICAL SOLUTION. ON
JULY 24 THE PRG DELEGATION ISSUED A PRESS COMMUNIQUE DENYING
THAT SECRET CONTACTS HAD TAKEN PLACE BETWEEN THE PRG AND THE GVN.
ACTING GVN FOREIGN MINISTER NGUYEN PHU DUC SAID THE SAME THING IN
A SPECIAL BROADCAST ON JULY 30 (SEE BELOW).

B GVN RELATIONS WITH SENEGAL
A GVN SPOKESMAN INFORMED THE PRESS ON JULY 21 THAT A
STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF SENEGAL EXPLAINING ITS
RECOGNITION OF THE PRG WAS CONFUSED, AND DISPUTED SENEGAL'S
ASSERTION THAT PARIS AGREEMENT AND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
VIET-NAM GAVE ANY LEGITIMATE STATUS AS GOVERNMENT OF THE PRG.
AN OFFICIAL GVN STATEMENT EXPOUNDING ON THIS WAS ISSUED JULY 25.
ON JULY 21 THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS CIRCULATED TO ALL
DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS IN SAIGON THE TEXT OF A JULY 12 NOTE VERBALE
TO SENEGAL ASKING IT TO RECONSIDER ITS ACTION. THE GVN IS
EXPECTED TO MAKE KNOWN ITS DECISION CONCERNING THE FUTURE OF
DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH SENEGAL WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS,
AFTER FORMER GVN AMBASSADOR TO SENEGAL NGUYEN DUY TOAN, NOW
ON A SPECIAL MISSION TO DAKAR, HAS HAD A CHANCE TO MAKE A
PERSONAL APPEAL TO PRESIDENT SENGHOR TO REVERSE SENEGAL'S
DECISION.

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C PRESIDENT THIEU'S TRIP TO THAILAND DELAYED
CONFUSION HAS REIGNED IN PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM
BANGKOK AND SAIGON REGARDING PRESIDENT THIEU'S PROJECTED TRIP
TO THAILAND ON OR ABOUT AUGUST 4. IT NOW APPEARS THAT THE TRIP
MAY BE UPGRADED FROM AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO A STATE VISIT WHICH
WOULD REQUIRE MORE TIME FOR PREPARATION AND THEREFORE DELAY
THE VISIT. THE GVN SPOKESMEN KEEP SAYING THAT PRESIDENT THIEU
WILL VISIT OTHER ASIAN COUNTRIES THIS YEAR BUT HAVE NOT YET
IDENTIFIED THEM OR THE TIMING OF THESE FUTURE VISITS.

D.GVN ISSUES STATEMENT ON EXPIRATION OF 45-DAY TARGET
DATE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF PARIS COMMUNIQUE

THE GVN ISSUED A STATEMENT ON JULY 28, THE TARGET DATE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE JUNE 13 PARIS COMMUNIQUE, BLAMING THE COMMUNISTS FOR LACK OF PROGRESS AND JUSTIFYING ITS PAST ACTIONS AND POSITIONS ON CEASEFIRE, POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, AND OTHER ISSUES COVERED BY COMMUNIQUE. AND ON JULY 30 A SPECIAL TV AND RADIO BROADCAST BY COMMISSIONER FOR INFORMATION HOANG DUC NHA, TPJMC GENERAL HIEP, AND FOREIGN MINISTER DUC REVIEWED THE WHOLE SUBJECT OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE JUNE 13 COMMUNIQUE, STRESSING THE FLEXIBILITY AND GOOD WILL OF THE GVN AND ITS DESIRE TO FIND SOLUTIONS TO ALL THE ISSUES INVOLVED.

E GVN AND CANADA ANNOUNCE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

A JOINT COMMUNIQUE WAS ISSUED ON JULY 31, THE DATE OF THE CANADIAN ICCS DELEGATION DEPARTURE, ANNOUNCING THAT THE GVN AND CANADA HAD AGREED TO ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND WOULD PROCEED WITHOUT DELAY TO THE EXCHANGE OF AMBASSADORS.

F.DONG DELEGATION REACHES BUCHAREST; LE DUAN ON CRIMEAN HOLIDAY

PREMIER PHAN VAN DONG'S DELEGATION LEFT POLAND AFTER A FIVE-DAY VISIT, ARRIVING IN BUCHAREST ON JULY 28. WHILE IN WARSAW, AN AGREEMENT ON POLISH AID TO THE DRV IN 1974 WAS SIGNED. A JOINT STATEMENT SIGNED AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE VISIT ROUGHLY PARALLELED THE STATEMENTS FOLLOWING EARLIER STOPS IN MOSCOW AND BUDAPEST. ONE NOTABLE OMISSION IN THE WARSAW DOCUMENT WAS RIAND'S FAILURE TO WRITE OFF PREVIOUS DRV DEBTS AS BOTH THE USSR AND HUNGARY HAD DONE. AS WAS THE CASE IN THE EARLIER CONFIDENTIAL

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STATEMENTS, THERE WAS A DISCREPANCY BETWEEN THE HOST GOVERNMENT'S DESCRIPTION OF THE VIET CONG'S PRG AND HANOI'S DESCRIPTION. WHEREAS THE HANOI VNA VERSION OF THE STATEMENT DESCRIBES THE PRG AS "THE ONLY GENUINE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE IN THE SOUTH," THE WARSAW VERSION CALLS THE PRG "THE ONLY GENUINE SPOKESMAN FOR THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE POPULATION OF SOUTH VIET-NAM."

THE BUCHAREST VISIT HAS, THUS FAR, FOLLOWED THE SPEECH, RALLY, BANQUET ROUTINE ESTABLISHED DURING EARLIER STOPS. FROM RUMANIA, THE DRV DELEGATION IS SCHEDULED TO TRAVEL TO BULGARIA. MEANWHILE, PARTY FIRST SECRETARY LE DUAN, WHO LED THE DELEGATION DURING ITS MOSCOW VISIT, IS REPORTED TO BE ON HOLIDAY IN CRIMEA. RADIO MOSCOW SAID ON JULY 29 THAT DUAN WAS VACATIONING ALONG WITH COMMUNIST PARTY CHIEFTAINS FROM HUNGARY, BULGARIA, POLAND, MONGOLIA AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

G VIETNAMESE COMMUNISTS LEAVE JAPAN; PRG GROUP DENIED ENTRY FOR GENSUIKYO CONFERENCE

A FOUR MAN VIETNAMESE COMMUNIST DELEGATION, INCLUDING TWO PRG (VIET CONG) REPRESENTATIVES TRAVELING ON NORTH VIETNAMESE PASSPORTS, LEFT JAPAN AFTER A THREE WEEK VISIT. THE VISIT,

SPONSORED BY TWO JAPANESE LEFTIST ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDED DISCUSSIONS ON REHABILITATION AID FOR NORTH VIET-NAM AND VIET CONG-CONTROLLED AREAS OF SVN FROM THEIR JAPANESE SYMPATHIZERS. ON A SEPARATE FRONT, KYODO REPORTED THAT THE GOJ HAS REJECTED APPLICATIONS FOR ENTRY INTO JAPAN FILED ON BEHALF OF FOUR MEMBERS OF THE PRG "PEACE COMMITTEE" WHO WANTED TO ATTEND THE NINETEENTH "WORLD CONFERENCE AGAINST ATOMIC AND HYDROGEN BOMBS." THE CONFERENCE IS SPONSORED BY THE JAPANESE ANTI-BOMB GROUP, GENSUIKYO, WHICH HAS CLOSE TIES TO THE JCP. HANOI REACTED TO THE GOJ DECISION BY REPORTING A PROTEST LETTER SENT BY THE JAPAN-VIET-NAM FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION DEMANDING THAT THE GOJ "RESPECT THE PARIS AGREEMENT" AND ALLOW THE VC DELEGATION TO ATTEND THE CONFERENCE. THE NORTH VIETNAMESE HAVE GIVEN NO INDICATION THAT JAPAN'S ACTION WOULD AFFECT DRV/GOJ NEGOTIATIONS ON ESTABLISHING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WHICH ARE CURRENTLY TAKING PLACE IN PARIS.

H.VIET CONG SIGN AGREEMENTS WITH MONGOLIA, BULGARIA
ANOTHER FACET OF THE VIET CONG EFFORT TO GAIN
INTERNATIONAL STANDING FOR THE PRG IS EVIDENT IN THE RECENT FLURRY
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OF AGREEMENTS SIGNED WITH FOREIGN NATIONS. THE TWO MOST RECENT
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 3 OF 3 SAIGON 13781

AGREEMENTS, AN AID PACT WITH MONGOLIA AND A CULTURAL AGREEMENT WITH BULGARIA, WERE SIGNED ON JULY 24, PRESUMABLY IN QUANG TRI PROVINCE. THE AGREEMENT WITH MONGOLIA CALLED FOR "URGENT AND FREE ECONOMIC AID FOR 1973", THE "URGENCY" OF WHICH WAS UNDERSCORED BY THE ARRIVAL AT DONG HA PORT OF THE "FIRST CONTINGENT OF 2,4000 TONS OF ASSISTANCE GOODS" ON THE SAME DAY THE AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED.

I. YEMEN AMBASSADOR ARRIVES HANOI
ALAWI ABDUL REHAN ASSAKAFF, THE FIRST AMBASSADOR TO THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF YEMEN TO THE DRV, ARRIVED IN HANOI ON JULY 26.

J. CONGO (B) PRESIDENT TO VISIT HANOI
THE DRV FOREIGN MINISTRY ANNOUNCED ON JULY 28 THAT PRESIDENT MARIEN NGOUABI OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO WOULD PAY AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE DRV "IN THE NEAR FUTURE."

K. MOSCOW REPORTS TRAINING AGREEMENT WITH DRV
RADIO MOSCOW REPORTED ON JULY 26 THAT AN AGREEMENT WITH THE DRV TO TRAIN NORTH VIETNAMESE CADRES IN THE USSR HAD BEEN REACHED ON JULY 25. ACCORDING TO THE BROADCAST, "ABOUT 8,000" VIETNAMESE, REPRESENTING 80 TECHNICAL SPECIALITIES, WILL RECEIVE TRAINING IN THE 1973-76 PERIOD.

L. MORE ENVOYS PRESENT CREDENTIALS IN VIET CONG ZONE
AMBASSADORS FROM NINE MORE COUNTRIES PLUS SIHANOUK'S
REPRESENTATIVE IN HANOI HAVE PRESENTED CREDENTIALS TO THE PRG,
BRINGING THE TOTAL TO 18 FOREIGN ENVOYS WHO HAVE VISITED THE VIET
CONG CONTROLLED ZONE IN QUANG TRI PROVINCE. THE NEWLY
ACCREDITED ENVOYS ARE: ASTRIT MERO, ALBANIA (RESIDENT HANOI);
NEKOLAY CHERNEV, BULGARIA (RESIDENT HANOI); LADISLAV JETMAR,
CZECHOSLOVAKIA (RESIDENT RANGOON); ABOUBACAR CAMARA, GUINEA
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(RESIDENT HANOI); ASSANE GRUINDO, MALI (RESIDENT PEKING);
SOSOBARAM SANDAGIYN, MONGOLIA (RESIDENT PEKING); PETRE
TANASIE, RUMANIA (RESIDENT NEW DELHI); AND MELORAD
BOZINOVIC, YUGOSLAVIA (POST OF RESIDENCE NOT KNOWN). THE SIHANOUK
GOVERNMENT-IN-EXILE (GRUNK) REPRESENTATIVE, SIEN AN, IS
RESIDENT IN HANOI.

WITH THIS LATEST SURGE IN ACCREDITATIONS, OVER HALF
OF THE 35 COUNTRIES RECOGNIZING THE PRG HAVE SENT ENVOYS
TO A COMMUNIST-CONTROLLED ZONE IN THE SOUTH. THE VIET
CONG COUNT ON SUCH VISITS TO ENHANCE THEIR IMAGE ABROAD BY
GIVING SUBSTANCE TO THEIR OFT-VOICED CLAIM THAT THERE EXIST
IN SVN "TWO ARMIES, TWO ADMINISTRATIONS AND TWO ZONES OF CONTROL."

A GVN SPOKESMAN ASSERTED, PREDICTABLY, THAT THE NEW
ACCREDITATIONS ADDED FURTHER CONFIRMATION OF THE COMMUNIST
NATURE OF THE PRG.

END CONFIDENTIAL

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

III. ECONOMIC

A. PRICES

THE USAID SAIGON RETAIL PRICE INDEX POSTED AN INCREASE
FOR THE 13TH CONSECUTIVE WEEK. THE INDEX OVERALL WAS UP 1.9
PERCENT. THE FOOD SIDE INCREASED BY 1.9 PERCENT AND THE NON-FOOD
SIDE 1.5 PERCENT. THE INCREASE FOR THE LAST MONTH WAS 6.4
PERCENT, 7.7 PERCENT FOR FOOD ITEMS AND 4 PERCENT FOR NON-FOOD
ITEMS. THE CONTINUING SLOW PACE OF DELTA DELIVERIES OF RICE
TO SAIGON COMBINED WITH HEAVY PURCHASING BY CENTRAL VIETNAM
MERCHANTS IN THE SAIGON WHOLESALE MARKET TO MOVE RETAIL RICE
PRICES UP ANOTHER 4 PERCENT. A FEW MEAT AND PRODUCE ITEMS
SHOWED MODEST MARKUPS. ON THE FOOD SIDE CONDENSED MILK AND SODA
POP WENT UP 4 AND 20 PERCENT RESPECTIVELY, PARTLY REFLECTING
PREVIOUS SUGAR PRICE INCREASES BUT MOSTLY THE DELAYED EFFECT
OF THE VALUE ADDED TAX. ELECTRICITY AND WATER CHARGES POSTED 12
AND 11 PERCENT INCREASES IN CURRENT BILLINGS AS THE VALUE ADDED
TAX WAS APPLIED TO UTILITIES.

B. BLACK MARKET CURRENCY AND GOLD PRICES

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BLACK MARKET CURRENCY RATES SHOWED NO CHANGE OVER LAST WEEK AND CONTINUE BELOW THE OFFICIAL EXCHANGE RATE OF 500:1 WITH QUOTES OF 498:1 FOR \$100 GREEN AND 493:1 FOR \$10 GREEN. GOLD LEAF PRICES INCREASED FROM 53,500 PIASTERS PER TAEI TO 55,000 AMID UNCONFIRMED REPORTS OF INCREASED PURCHASING BY BOTH LOCAL NATIONALS AND FOREIGNERS. CONCERN OVER THE CURRENT RATE OF INFLATION AND THE SLOW PACE OF BUSINESS MAY BE LEADING SOME PEOPLE TO TURN THEIR PIASTERS TO GOLD AS A WAY OF PROTECTING THEMSELVES AGAINST FURTHER INFLATION.

END UNCLASSIFIED

BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

C. DIOXIN CONTAMINATION OF VIETNAMESE SHRIMP
TESTS PERFORMED AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY BY THE MESELSON BAUGHMAN GROUP ON RECENTLY COLLECTED SAMPLES FROM THE AREAS TESTED IN 1970 REVEALED THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF DIOXIN ALTHOUGH AT ONE-THIRD OF THE LEVELS FOUND IN THE 1970 SAMPLES. THE TESTS HAVE NOT YET BEEN COMPLETED, AND THE RESULTS OBTAINED SO FAR HAVE NOT YET BEEN MADE PUBLIC. FOLLOWING ON THE HEELS OF LOCAL NEWSPAPER REPORTS TO THE EFFECT THAT VIETNAMESE SHRIMP HAS BEEN FOUND FREE OF DIOXIN AND THAT EXPORTS TO JAPAN WOULD BE RESUMED SHORTLY, THE HARVARD FINDINGS WOULD DEAL A SEVERE BLOW TO VIETNAMESE HOPES.

NO TESTS HAVE BEEN MADE ON THE SHRIMP SAMPLES COLLECTED IN THE RACH GIA AREA OF THE DELTA WHERE A LARGE PROPORTION OF THE SHRIMP NORMALLY EXPORTED TO JAPAN AND NOW HELD IN STORAGE THERE ORIGINATES. THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE HAS INFORMED US THAT THE JAPANESE WOULD MAKE ITS OWN TESTS ON THESE SHRIMP. IT ALSO STATED THAT IT MIGHT TAKE AT LEAST SIX TO EIGHT MONTHS FOR THE JAPANESE TO SET UP TESTING FACILITIES AND TO FAMILIARIZE THEMSELVES WITH THE TESTING METHODS. THIS HAS BEEN CONFIRMED BY THE JAPANESE EMBASSY IN SAIGON.

THE JAPANESE EMBARGO ON VIETNAMESE SHRIMP HAS PRESENTED THE VIETNAMESE SHRIMP INDUSTRY WITH SERIOUS PROBLEMS. CONSIDERABLE INVESTMENT IS TIED UP IN BOTH THE SHRIMP DETAINED IN JAPANESE PORTS AND VIETNAMESE PROCESSING FACILITIES AFFECTED BY THE JAPANESE EMBARGO.

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THERE IS REASON TO BELIEVE THAT VIETNAMESE SHRIMP FROM THE RACH GIA AREA WHERE A LARGE PROPORTION OF THE SHRIMP NORMALLY SHIPPED TO JAPAN ORIGINATES MAY BE FREE FROM DIOXIN.

D. CY 1973 JAPANESE AID TO GVN

A BRIEF PRELIMINARY REPORT FROM TOKYO INDICATES THAT
GOJ HAS DECIDED TO EXTEND ASSISTANCE TO THE GVN VALUED AT 50
MILLION US DOLLARS. IT IS REPORTED THAT 20 MILLION DOLLARS OF
THIS WILL BE IN THE FORM OF GRANTS FOR HUMANITARIAN AID, PRIMARILY
REFUGEE HOUSING AND ROAD AND BRIDGE RECONSTRUCTION PROJECTS.
ABOUT 30 MILLION DOLLARS WORTH WILL BE LOW INTEREST LOANS FOR
COMMODITY AID.

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